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A
SECOND LETTER
Addressed to the DELEGATES
From the several Congregations of
PROTESTANT DISSENTERS.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

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SECOND LETTER

Addressed to



From the General Collections of

PROTESTANT

[Faint text, possibly a date or reference]

A
SECOND LETTER

ADDRESSED TO THE
DELEGATES
FROM THE SEVERAL CONGREGATIONS
OF
PROTESTANT DISSENTERS
WHO MET AT DEVIZES
ON SEPTEMBER 14, 1789.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE FIRST LETTER.

“ Many of our Modern Assertors of Toleration have
feemed to leave us destitute of what he calls a *Public Leading*,
or *Ministry*; which Notion he treats as mere Enthusiasm, or
horrid Irreligion. For, in truth, Religion cannot be left
thus to shift for itself, without the Care and Countenance of
the Magistrate.”

Lord Shaftesbury's Letter VII.

SALISBURY:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY E. EASTON;

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1789.

SECOND LETTER

ADDRESSED TO THE

DELEGATES

FROM THE SEVERAL CONGREGATIONS

OF

PROTESTANT DISSIDENTS

D. A. J.



BY THE ALMIGHTY

Printed and sold by R. B. JOHNSON, 10, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, LONDON. W.

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10, ST. MARTIN'S LANE

LONDON. W.

1844

SECOND LETTER.

GENTLEMEN,

IF the several Complaints of Dissenters throughout the kingdom were collected together, the amount of them would be nearly to this effect:

I.

The Magistrate has no Right to take cognizance of Principles: but by excluding Dissenters from places of Trust and Emolument on account of their Principles, he does take such cognizance; he therefore assumes a Right, which does not belong to him.

B

II.

II.

There is no necessity that any One particular Form of Religious Worship, or any One particular Church should be establish'd.

III.

It is a grievance, that the Favours of Government should continue to be confer'd on any One Sect whatever, and that all Sects should not in their turn be favour'd.

IV.

It is a grievance, that Dissenters, who never frequent the National Church, should nevertheless be compell'd to maintain the National Church Ministers.

These Four Articles seem to comprise the Substance of all complaints urged by Dissenters as Objections to the Ecclesiastical Part of our Government, consider'd in a Political View: if therefore proper Answers can be given to the subjects contained in these

Arti-

Articles, the Objections will be obviated, and the Dissenters ought in Reason to admit the General Position, "that however it may militate against their own Private Views, yet for the sake of Public Good, some Form of Ecclesiastical Government should be supported." And this Position I shall now endeavour to defend, by considering the Four Articles specified above, taking each in its order.

I.

That the Magistrate has no Right to take cognizance of Principles, is partly true, and partly false. It is always *true*, when applied merely to the *Internal Thought* of the Individual Man or of the Citizen: for every Man, whether in his Individual or Social capacity, *may* and *will* think as he pleases on all subjects whatever; but it is not unfrequently *false*, when extended beyond *Thought* to open *Declaration*: for there may be cases, in which

such Declaration may be consider'd as an Overt Act contrary to some Maxims adopted, or some Laws ordain'd, for Public Welfare. In such cases, the Magistrate would be highly culpable, did he not endeavour to prevent the spreading of Principles, and did he not absolutely forbid their Authors and Abettors to propagate them.

Let us first look to France and America for examples.

While the National Assembly in France is constituting a Free Government, could the President escape severe censure if he were to hear without indignation a defence of Absolute Monarchy? Would he not be called upon to stop language at this time insulting? Would not the Royal Partisan be in peril of his life, who could dare vindicate the doctrines of Passive Obedience, and Non-Resistance?

Again;

Again; When the United States of America were contending for Independency, did Congress permit Loyalists to condemn it's proceedings, or to avow attachment to this Country? On the contrary, was not every person, though but suspected of partiality to England, mark'd out as a dangerous Man, and thence forced to retire?

Let us now put a case in our own Country.

Were any Member of either House in Parliament so weak as to propose the introduction of Popery, or so wicked as to excite a spirit of persecution like GARDINER, or so iniquitous as to recommend cruelty of execution like JEFFERIES, would you not think the Magistrate had a Right to take cognizance of such a Man's Principles? Yourself, Gentlemen, would be among the first to condemn such Principles as treasonable to the State; yourselves would vote for silencing by coercive measures such a foe to Public Liberty; yourselves would pe-

tion the Commons to impeach such an enemy and traitor to his Country; and thus would you evince, that the Magistrate has a Right to take cognizance of Principles *declared* by a Citizen.

It cannot then be affirmed as an Universal Proposition “that the Magistrate has no Right to take cognizance of Principles:” in their warmest zeal for Liberty, neither France, nor America could allow this: nor should you, consistently with what you would rightly do in the case last mentioned, deny that where Public Good requires it, the Magistrate is bound in duty and a regard for his own conservation to prevent the propagation of Principles not conducive to his Government; in which prevention, he acts entirely on the allowed principle of Self-Defence. And upon this idea it is, that the Chief Magistrate of this Country withholds Favours from All descriptions of persons, who avow a Dissent from the Fundamental Principles of that Constitution by which

which he is bound to govern: in withholding which Favours, he acts not contrary to Right, he assumes no Right which belongs not properly to him, since he does no more than prevent, not by *punishment*, but through *discouragement*, the most lenient method possible, the Propagation of Principles unfriendly to One part of the Constitution.

But you will urge as in Article the second, There is no necessity that any One particular Form of Religious Worship, or any One particular Church should be establish'd.

This question involves in it many consequences, and therefore deserves very serious and mature deliberation.

Man is born a Religious Creature. In every civilized nation, either a Spiritual or Idol Deity has worship. Men will meet together to pay that worship. Suppose but Twenty met for that purpose: how are they to proceed?

Some Form must be adopted. But what Form? One suggests sacrifice; another prayer; a third austere practices; a fourth singing; and in short, each will recommend his own favourite mode. But at this rate, all will be confusion: at length then the case will require, that All should acquiesce in One Form suggested by some person, who has influence over the rest.

In this Assembly of but Twenty Persons may be seen the Origin of Church Establishment, and the necessity for such Establishment.

Suppose there be in this Country Twenty different Systems all founded on Christianity seen in different views. Let twenty persons, each of a different opinion respecting particulars held essential, meet together for Religious worship. It were impossible for any worship to be paid; because no one man would accord with another either as to the Form proper to be observed, or as to the doctrines fit to be inculcated. These persons then
must

must separate entirely, and each look out for Fellow-Citizens with whom to perform Religious Service after a manner more suitable to his own notions and tenets. But each of these persons, when separated from their original Meeting, will consider his own particular way best; for otherwise he would not have gone that way. He will too wish his own system to prevail; for why otherwise should he leave other systems, but that he might promote his own? And so we shall see Twenty Sects, All contending for superiority, and endeavouring to rise in credit each above the other.

Now as in this Country there must be a Chief Magistrate, and as that Chief Magistrate will naturally wish to pay Religious worship, he must necessarily join himself to some one or other of the Twenty Sects. Or would you have him go by alternate weeks to each of the Sects? Would you have him be to-day an Athanasian, to-morrow an Arian; then a Socinian; then an Unitarian, and so on by rotation?

rotation? Such pliancy of Conscience you would justly deem contemptible; and his departing from Sect to Sect would be term'd gross Apostacy. He must then choose his Sect: and to the Sect thus chosen, he cannot but be partial; for had he not been partial, he had not chosen one Sect in preference to another. The same sincerity, with which every other Member of a different Sect is actuated, will prompt the Chief Magistrate to wish his Sect superior to others; probably too he will imagine, that if his Sect could take the lead and be guarded by Public Authority, there might be an end of competition among all Sects; for it commonly happens, that the exertions of an opponent decrease in proportion as the success of the party opposed encreases. And thus we shall see the Chief Magistrate at the head of a Sect, whose Tenets may be most congenial with his own.

Respect and Influence always attend on Power, if that Power be exercised with wisdom
and

and moderation. In vain will you declaim against the infirmity of Human Nature: the fact is so, that the Ruling Power will attract Respect and gather support from Persons the most considerable in rank and fortune, who are legally and mildly governed by it; and it will have Real weight, in proportion to the Real Respect in which it is held. The Chief Magistrate, by joining any particular Sect, will draw others after him to the same Sect: his example will be prevalent, where the Sect holds no doctrine repugnant to Civil Liberty. And thus his Sect will be strengthen'd by the accession of Subjects the most considerable, if not in number, yet in authority and opulence: and it will then naturally follow that so powerful a Body should, from partiality to their own Sect, take some effectual methods to render it's superiority permanent. Thence it comes that the prevailing Sect is establish'd, i. e. is settled on these Conditions, that whoever would be Candidates for it's Favours must comply with it's Rules.

This

This is the rise and progress of Sect Establishment, or Church Establishment, call it which you please ; a progress unavoidable, so long as Men will conceive different opinions concerning Religion, so long as they will maintain the opinions they conceive, so long as they will aim at placing their own opinions in the most favourable and advantageous light. Till we of this Country are brought into one way of thinking, it seems absolutely impossible but that some One Sect should be uppermost, and that others must make concessions : the Sect uppermost, for the time it continues superior, will be the National Church : in former ages the Papists prevailed ; under Cromwell, the Independents ; at the Glorious Revolution, the Present Church Establishment was secured by a Calvinistic Prince and a genuine Whig Parliament ; by Men, who knew, who loved, who defended the Constitution, the very Constitution which is now reviled by Dissenters. Yes, Gentlemen, it was King William the Third who gave sanction
to

to our Present Constitution ; and the Acts which offend you were partly retained and partly drawn by Men, who had felt the oppression of an Independent Usurper ; who had lamented the levity of a King indifferent to all Religion ; who had execrated the cruelty of a Papist Bigot ; who were nobly resolved to enjoy and perpetuate Freedom Civil and Religious to the UTMOST extent POSSIBLE AND PRACTICABLE.

Considering then the diversity of Sects and Opinions to be found in this Country, and the strong propensity with which all Men are actuated to place their own Sect and their own Opinion uppermost, it must follow from the course of things, that unless contending parties keep always on an equality, which is seldom the case when the parties are numerous, some One particular Sect should be prevalent : so that the Establishment of some Church or another arises in a measure from Natural Necessity, i. e. as a certain Effect

natu-

naturally and necessarily proceeding from a certain Cause. The Cause is, that Religious Parties will strive for superiority so long as Man is Man: the Effect is, that one Party or the other must in the end be victorious.

But further; there is moreover a necessity for establishing One National Church, arising from Political Expediency.

Expediency requires Unanimity in the Great Council of the Nation. That Unanimity will be more or less, in proportion to the greater or less difference of opinions respecting Religious Subjects. And it may reasonably be supposed, that such difference will be less where the Chief Magistrate visibly patronises One Sect, than where he is indifferent to all: the cause is, that the example of the Magistrate will naturally lead the majority of his Senators to join the same Sect: whereas, if he is indifferent to all, a vast diversity of Religious

gious Opinions would be brought into the Senate.

You cannot pretend to say that Religious Opinions will have no influence on Political Conduct. You cannot affirm it as your persuasion that no zeal for Religious Forms and Doctrines will be carried by Laymen into the Senate. For if so, whence came the transactions of the last Century, under Charles the First, under Cromwell, under James the Second, under William the Third? And whence is it, that you are calling on all voters to fill the House of Commons with Dissenters at the next Parliament? Your knowledge of History must have convinced you, that in every Country the Spirit of Politics is congenial with the Spirit of Religion: as harmony in Religion is more or less general, there is proportionable Unanimity in Politics. But it can never be a mode of obtaining harmony in Religion to set Twenty different Sects in competition with each other: the more obvious

vious method is to raise One Sect above competition, and make it (in Sir Francis Bacon's phrase) "The Eye of England.*"

The force of reasonings not dissimilar to these, has been seen and acknowledged not by Religionists only, but by mere Men of the World: by HUME for instance; who, although he treats the subject in a manner insulting to Priests of every denomination, and in language not becoming the philosophic character he affected to support, is yet an Advocate for a Public Church Establishment, upon the principle of preserving peace and order in the State.

It

* " Sir Francis Bacon (who was always for moderate counsels), when one was speaking of such a Reformation of the Church of England, as would in effect make it no Church; said thus to him, Sir, the subject we talk of is the Eye of England; and if there be a speck or two in the Eye, we endeavour to take them off; but he were a strange oculist who would pull out the Eye." Lord Bacon's Works. Vol. iii. p. 293. Edit. 4to. 1730.

“It may naturally be thought (says the Historian) * at first view, that the Ecclesiastics belong to the first class, and that their encouragement, as well as that of Lawyers and Physicians, may safely be trusted to the liberality of Individuals, who are attached to their doctrines, and who find benefit or consolation from their Spiritual Ministry and Assistance. Their industry and vigilance will, no doubt, be whetted by such an additional motive; and their skill in the profession, as well as their address in governing the minds of the People, must receive daily encrease, from their encreasing practice, study, and attention.

“But if we consider the matter more closely, we shall find, that this interested diligence of the Clergy is what every wise Legislator will study to prevent; because in every Religion, except the true, it is highly pernicious, and has even a natural tendency to pervert the
c
true,

* Hume's Hist. of England. Hen. VIII. c. 29.

true, by infusing into it a strong mixture of superstition, folly, and delusion. Each ghostly practitioner, in order to render himself more precious and sacred in the eyes of his Retainers, must inspire them with the most violent abhorrence against all other Sects, and continually endeavour, by some novelty, to excite the languid devotion of his Audience. No regard will be paid to truth, morals, or decency in the doctrines inculcated. Every tenet will be adopted, that best suits the disorderly affections of the human frame. Customers will be drawn to each Conventicle by new industry and address in practising on the passions and credulity of the populace. And in the end, the Magistrate will find that he has paid dearly for his pretended frugality, in saving a settled foundation for the Priests; and that in reality the most decent and advantageous composition, which he can make with the Spiritual Guides, is to bribe their indolence, by affixing stated salaries to their Profession, and rendering it superfluous for them

them to be farther active, than merely to preserve their flock from straying in quest of new pastures."

As this Extract reflects equally, or perhaps more, on the Establish'd than the Dissenting Ministers (for Indolence in Religious Service is more culpable than Industry honestly though injudiciously applied) the mere quoting of it should give no offence. It is quoted only to shew that even such a Man as Hume (who was bigotted to nothing but Atheism) could allow it necessary towards the preserving of peace and order, that there should be some settled Foundation for Priests. The question would be, the Priests of what Sect? You will contend for preference to those of your Sects, and we should be earnest for those of our own; which in effect would be striving to recommend the Form of Worship and Doctrine of each Sect as most worthy of Public Notice.

Religious Forms and Doctrines either *are* or *are not* of serious concern: if they *are not*, then all objections to a Test must be nugatory, because no scruples of Conscience can impede a person indifferent to Religion: but if Religious Forms and Doctrines *are* of serious concern, then we have reason to apprehend from what has already happen'd in this kingdom, and from the uncharitable language even now too frequently and too bitterly used on all sides, that you in your form, and we in our's should strive to have the precedence, if either one or the other of us were not apparently encouraged and principally distinguish'd by Government: in order to prevent which emulation, an emulation of fatal tendency, Government does encourage and distinguish us rather than you.

But let me suppose that Government should discourage us: what Sect would you wish to be prefer'd? You will say perhaps, All Sects should share alike; and Men of all persuasions
should

should be employed in Civil Offices of Trust and Emolument. But if All, then Jews, Mahometans, and Catholics will in their turn be Revenue Officers, Civil Magistrates, and Ministers of State. And can you seriously affirm it to be your real opinion, that a Magistrate or Minister of either denomination would not watch his opportunity to promote his Brother-Sectarist? Aggregate sums are formed of Units compounded: put several Individual Jews, Mahometans, or Catholics into power, and it will be impossible but that by degrees some consequences would ensue unfavourable both to you and us, as either of the parties must in time become a formidable Body not well disposed to us.

Do you reply, "Only Protestant Christians should be in places of power?" If so, there is an end of your Argument for Natural Right to power: for if Jews, Mahometans, and Catholics are to be excluded, then All Men alike have not a Natural Right. Do you next

plead not Natural, but Political Right? On what do you ground your Political Right? Political Right is founded on the appointment of the Legislative Body : that appointment at present stipulates certain conditions to be performed, previously to the exercising of public Authority. You do not choose to perform those conditions, and thus exclude yourselves from the Political Right to power. But in fact, as for any Right to places of Public Trust and Emolument, no Man whatever in this Country (except the King, and some few particularly privileged) has such Right, independently of some Election or Choice exercised by others.* Nay even the King's Right originates from Choice in the People.

Should you be disposed to allow what has been hitherto advanced, still perhaps you will have recourse to the Third Article; viz. It is a grievance that the favours of Government should continue to be confer'd on any One
Sect

* See the First Letter address'd to the Delegates.

Sect only, and that All Sects should not in their turn be favour'd.

If any persons complain after this manner, they speak of Individual Men; whereas they should speak of Principles. They should object, that the Magistrate does not favour all principles alike, each in their turn; or in other words, that he does not adopt in his Government by successive rotation, Principles the most heterogeneous, the most repugnant to each other. The Legislator, in specifying conditions for the assuming of Authority, has respect not to Men, but solely to Principles; and by Principles is the Chief Magistrate to be directed in the Choice of his several officers. According to the idea of these complainers, all Principles are to have their period of Public Support; one while, Presbyterian; another, Independent; then Anabaptists; and then perhaps (though I rather think it may be doubted) Church-of-England Principles. But surely the slightest consideration would

convince the advisers of so preposterous a scheme, that no Government could possibly exist, if such a change of Principles were alternately adopted. Imbecillity at home and Contempt abroad are always the result of Fluctuating Principles, as they must produce Fluctuating Counsels.

It is to be observed moreover, that the advocates for this alternate participation of power and emolument, take for granted a very material point, viz. that the Sect, whose turn it might be to have favour, would when in possession of Authority and other advantages most willingly relinquish their places after a fix'd period, that another Sect might succeed. But does it usually happen that men resign high offices so readily? On the contrary, does it not more usually happen, that the Party, which is uppermost, will be tenacious of superiority, and watch with some jealousy the motions of those who are not so elevated? If the latter be not the case, whence proceeded
the

the dreadful events of 1780? Why did a Protestant Association, but Nine Years since, beset the Houses of Parliament in defiance of all Laws with Forty Thousand Petitioners, and why was the City of London plunged into all the horrors of a Civil War? The Catholics profess'd that "they entertained no Principles inconsistent with the welfare of Government;" why were they not credited? Why should they not be relieved? Yet Nine Years have scarcely elapsed since We Protestants thus shew'd our Spirit, when the smallest intention of relieving the Catholics was indicated by the Legislature. The major part of us Protestants were then actuated, are still actuated, by jealousy towards them. Protestants have now the superiority: the least diminution of that superiority they will not patiently endure. The transactions of that so very recent a period should be a most convincing proof, that no Sect whatever will be inclined to descend from it's more elevated rank, in order that competitors may share with it in advantages. At least, the
time

time for such disinterested self-denial is not yet come: nor can it come, till an evil worse than moderate zeal has befallen us; I mean total Indifference to Religion. I repeat the word *moderate* zeal, that I may not be mistaken as an advocate for *intemperate* zeal: intemperate zeal I abhor, and therefore mention with mark'd detestation the proceedings of us Protestants only Nine Years since; proceedings which should warn us All not to begin anew Religious Disputes; proceedings which should remind us All that we little know the consequences of beginning to foment them!

“Are we then to bear with patience (say you) any and all grievances imposed on us by Government?” No; most assuredly not, if you suffer any *real* Grievances. But beware how you are misled by a set of words without well weighing the import of them: beware how you raise a factious spirit, a clamorous murmur of discontent, and disturb the peace
of

of the Community, when you absolutely suffer no Grievance.

“ The Test Act, the Penal Laws (you reply) are Grievances :” you will refer me to the Third of your Resolutions, wherein you censure Government as acting against liberty, good sense, and humanity, “ by imposing this Test upon the execution of some offices and not requiring it in others, without any reasonable distinction ; and by affording no additional security to the Constitution either Civil or Ecclesiastical, which they were intended to defend ; and lastly by inflicting on those who fill such offices without taking the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper within a limited time, agreeably to the rites of the Church of England, a very heavy penalty, and such severe disabilities, as ought only to be annexed to the most atrocious crimes.”

Allow me to remark, that in this your Third Resolution there is palpable Inconsistency.

sistency. You object to a Test altogether, as to an Evil; and yet complain that the Test is not more generally required; or in other words, that the Evil which you dislike is not extended wider than at present it is extended. Is not this somewhat like contradiction?

Then again, you beg the question, when you affirm that the Test Laws afford "no additional security to the Constitution either Civil or Ecclesiastical." Perhaps after reading the Arguments adduced in this Letter for the necessity of a Church Establishment, some persons may be of opinion that Test Laws, of some kind or another, do afford additional security to the Constitution Civil and Ecclesiastical.

As to the severity of the Penal Laws, it is not my present business to discuss *particulars*, but to argue on GENERAL Principles; according to which I aver, that if it be expedient for the Magistrate to support a Government Eccle-

Ecclesiastical and Civil, then it will be extremely impolitic in him to employ, as subordinate Ministers or Officers, persons that are not friendly to BOTH parts of his Government: he would be indirectly instrumental to the destruction of his own Government, if he employed such persons. He must then have some proof of attachment to BOTH parts. Whatever proof he requires, should be ample, and unequivocal. It should be known universally that he requires such proof. Then I say, if any person knowing such proof to be the condition on which he is to be employed, will yet creep into Offices without performing the condition, there will be reason to suspect him of Political Insincerity: and some severe penalty should be inflicted on such Falsehood as on a Political Crime most atrocious; for a most atrocious crime it is, voluntarily and knowingly to engage in a cause with a determination to betray it.

But

But granting that the Penal Laws are harsh :
do you really and truly suffer from them whilst
you continue to act as virtuous Men and
peaceable Subjects ? What Dr. Price acknow-
ledges in some cases, may be applied to all :
“ Thanks be to God, the times in this Country
are happily altered. We can now think as we
please, and profess what we think : and though
the Laws continue the same, we can rely on
the generosity (not to say the Justice) of the
Public, for protection against them, while we
keep within the limits of fair discussion and
argument.”*

Again

* See p. 56, Dr. PRICE'S Sermons on the Christian
Doctrine.

There is much liberality in the following declaration
made by Mr. TAYLOR at his Ordination June 21, 1770.
“ But though I profess myself a hearty friend to the Dis-
senting Interest, I cannot, however, omit the present oppor-
tunity of declaring, that I do by no means approve the
conduct of those of my own persuasion, who take a mali-
cious pleasure in continually exposing the defects of the
Religion of their Country, and in pouring out uncharitable
censures against those, who support and defend it. Such a
conduct

Again then I repeat it, you absolutely suffer no Grievance. Grievance implies Injury: you suffer no one Injury; for Government in it's conduct towards you violates no single Right which you can claim as Men or Citizens. Are not your Persons Free? Are not your words as unrestrained, and your actions as unimpeded as ours? Are not your fortunes and properties secure? Are not the Courts of Justice impartial, deciding equitably to Men of All denominations? Are you not returnable to the House of Commons, if the People choose you as Representatives? Are you prevented from sitting in the House of Lords, if the privilege of Peerage belongs to you? And do
you

conduct as this, I am persuaded, can answer no good purpose. Whilst I enjoy the advantages of a toleration; whilst I am permitted without molestation to worship God in the manner I most approve; I shall think myself bound by the laws of candour, of moderation, and even of gratitude, to refrain from saying, or doing, any thing which may give unnecessary offence to the professors of that System of Religion, which the Laws of this kingdom have countenanced and established."

you not form Religious opinions each for himself, and each worship the Deity after whatever manner he thinks proper?

Say not then you are aggrieved, unless by the term *aggrieved* you would be understood to intimate you have not every thing you could wish. You are compelled to do nothing: you are left free to do every thing. You may be Magistrates if you will convince the Legislator that you are friends to BOTH parts of that Constitution, which by King, Lords, and Commons, (the Three Estates which have undoubted right to legislate for this Country) was originally establish'd, and is still preserved: but if you choose not to convince the Legislator that you are such friends, he does not compel you, he does not solicit you to do it. You have not the smallest foundation for complaint, unless you are so unreasonable as to demand things incompatible. Every thing in life hath it's condition. Do you wish for security from foreign Enemies?

Enemies? You must submit to pay taxes for the support of Fleets and Armies. Do you wish for Civil Liberty? You must submit to have Laws framed by the Legislative Body for the restraint of Individuals. Do you wish for a RESPECTABLE Government in England,* the seat of Empire to a wide Dominion and not so circumstanced as either Scotland or Ireland? You must submit to regulations appointed by the Three Estates of the Realm for the promoting of domestic Peace and Order.

* The Resolutions pass'd at DORCHESTER on the 14th instant, lay particular stress on the cases of Scotland and Ireland. But the cases are not parallel; for neither of those Countries is so circumstanced as England, either with respect to number of Inhabitants, Internal Sects, or External Connexions. The same System of Policy is not applicable to all situations. A small State may be governed with fewer degrees of subordination than a large one. A State, that has no remote provinces to rule, requires less vigor in it's Constitution, than a Nation that must controul far-distant Administrations. Then with regard to Ireland, as the Catholics have a majority of six to one over the Protestants, it is the interest of All Protestants to unite in one common cause against them. The instancing then of Scotland and Ireland is nothing to the purpose.

Order. These are the prices by which such Public Blessings are to be obtained. But Peace and Order are the effects of Unanimity, as in all other matters, so more particularly in the concerns of Religion : and though perfect Unanimity is unattainable, yet a sufficient degree of it for the security and stability of Government may be procured by the mode, not assumed at the sole will of the Chief Magistrate, but appointed by Legal Authority, viz. by making the Chief Magistrate take the lead in Civil and Ecclesiastical Concerns, and by prescribing One Common Form of proving attachment to the Constitution : acquiescence in which Form is proposed as the Condition on which the Favours (for they are no man's Rights) the Favours of Subordinate Magistracy may be granted ; perfect liberty however is left to every person either to accept the Favours with the annex'd Condition, or to reject both, at his option.

I come

I come now to the Fourth Article :

It is a Grievance, that Dissenters, who never frequent the National Church, should nevertheless be compell'd to maintain the National Church Ministers.

If what has been said on Article the Second be conclusive, and if it has been proved that some Establish'd Form of Religion be necessary for the preservation of Peace and Order, then this seeming Grievance can have no weight as a Public Objection, however it may effect an Individual. Public Good requires that in the Church, as in the Army, Navy, and Law, there should be officiating persons regularly appointed and maintained by the Public, for the discharge of certain duties necessary for the general welfare. The money paid by all Subjects for the maintenance of the National Clergy is to be considered in the same light as any other Tax contributed towards the discharge of National Expences : and there is no more Reason in complaining that money is

paid to the National Church Ministry by a person who frequents not the Church, than there would be in murmuring to pay taxes for support of an Army, though one had no Commission in it; or of a Fleet, though one had never enter'd a Ship: or of a Court of Justice, though one were no Barrister, nor had ever commenced a Law-Suit. A National Church either is, or is not, to be supported: if it is, then all Subjects must contribute to the maintenance of the Church as to the maintenance of other National Establishments. The Legislator establishes a Church; the consequence is obvious.*

And

* Remember (says Lord Shaftesbury) that He, whom you own to be your *Master* and Legislator, made no Laws relating to Civil Power, or interfering with it. So that all Pre-eminence, Wealth, or Pension, which you receive, or expect to receive, by help of this assumed Character (i.e. the Priest's) is from the Public, whence both the Authority and Profit is derived; and on which it legally depends; all other Pretensions of *Priests* being Jewish and Heathenish, and in our State, Seditious, Disloyal, and Factious."

Letter IX.

And suffer me in this place to remark the illiberality, with which some persons of late have censured the Clergy, for legally demanding *small* sums legally due, but obstinately and iniquitously withholden. It should be remember'd, that Priests are forbidden by Law to exercise any Trade: the greater part of them must therefore depend on their Ecclesiastical Incomes for subsistence: those Incomes arise from an accumulation of *small* sums; in the most laborious Vicarages this is particularly the case. If then it be a crime, or an act censurable to demand *small* sums, the Clergy must be reduced either to ignominy, or to poverty: by requiring punctual payment of their dues they will incur the one; by remitting such dues they will sink into the other. And now see with what cruelty these Declaimers treat the Clergy. The Legislator encourages persons to become Priests; appoints that they should be paid by a collection of *small* sums; commands them not to pursue any secular employment; and yet they are to be reviled for col-

collecting the very sums appropriated to their use, and for their maintenance. It was well argued by a most able and most respectable Lawyer,* that Modus and small Tythe to the Clergy were as Quit-Rents to Lay-Lords; and that there was no greater impropriety that the one should demand their dues, than that the other should. If Declaimers would abolish the Priesthood entirely, let them speak out: open enemies are more honourable than false friends. In such a declaration they would at least have the credit of being Bold Adventurers, but could scarcely be called deep proficient in Politics. The office of Priesthood (consider'd merely in a political view) is to inculcate the observance of Moral duties; to make Men virtuous upon principle; to effect that which no Magistrate can effect, the prevention of evil in secret; to render the People good Subjects and good Men. Whoever sees not that such an office must be of infinite service to any State, more particularly to a Free State, where

* Lord Kenyon.

where Military Force and Despotic Power dare not terrify Men into decent manners, must have consider'd this point but very slightly. I say not, that no Man of Moral Worth, I say that no Politic Magistrate, however wicked he may be himself, will ever attempt to abolish Priesthood in every shape and of every description. Such an endeavour would be imprudent on two accounts; if it succeeded, he would find his Government infinitely more difficult, as his Subjects would be more dissolute: probably however the endeavour would be fruitless; for as Men are Religious no less than social Beings, some Religion or another would be embraced, and Priests would be appointed: the only questions would be, whether the True God or an Idol should be worshipped, and whether the Priests should be Priests of JEHOVAH or of Jupiter. In every point of view then, a Priesthood must be retain'd; and if retain'd, must be supported. The support too should be liberal in order to be effectual; for such

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liberality will in general encourage Ministers to qualify themselves in learning, and to conduct themselves with propriety.

Thus then have I consider'd the Four Articles specified at the beginning of this Letter : and if the Arguments used on this occasion be added to those of a Former Letter addressed to you, the Chief Heads of All your Complaints will have received some answer.

To sum up all in few words. After some reading, and much thinking, I must for myself conclude thus : that no Country in it's Constitution Free, in it's inhabitants Populous, in it's opinions Divided, in it's Dependencies and Dominion widely Connected, can possibly have Stability and Permanency in its Government, if there be not some Religious Establishment : that such Establishment should be made on so wide a scale, as to comprehend all who can agree in Fundamental Points, however they may differ as to immaterial particulars ;

ticulars: that therefore it's Doctrines should be as plain and pure as they can be made: that it's language should be moderate, and conduct mild towards all Sects whatever, since after all, be the Establish'd Church what it may, it is but the Prevailing Sect: and that to disturb the prevailing Sect, unless it be notoriously bad, is improper, impolitic, and inexpedient, because * DANGEROUS, extremely DANGEROUS to the Civil Government.

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* On the Seventh Resolution pass'd at DORCHESTER it may be remark'd, that although the Reformation and Revolution most abundantly prove it irreconcilable with Facts to assert that "ALL Innovations are dangerous," yet it by no means follows thence that SOME Innovations may not be so. If from any Innovations may be fear'd a greater degree of Evil, than what is experienc'd in the Case to be alter'd, then such Innovations are dangerous. The question will be, what can justify the fearing of such Evil? Clearly, fair Reasoning upon Experience of Facts, the very ground of appeal to which the Resolution refers. Such Reasoning then on the Experience of Facts justifies us in fearing more Ill than Good from the Innovations proposed; we may therefore in this Case pronounce Innovations to be dangerous.

Upon their own ground of arguing, there really seems nothing more which Dissenters can with consistency urge,

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In all this, I trust there is nothing Intolerant: much less will it be intolerant or illiberal to acknowledge without reserve, that should King, Lords, and Commons, declare any other Sect to be more conformable to the Spirit of the Gospel, more congenial with the Civil Government of this Country, and therefore more to be encouraged than our Church; considering as I do, that in those Three Estates is vested the Legislative Power; persuaded as I am, that Legal Iniquity will never be sanction'd by the Parliament of a Limited Monarchy, and that Opposition to what is

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 than "that it is expedient at least to try what may be the result of abolishing all Tests." But this would be in effect to say, it is expedient to set aside what we retain as a Presumptive Good, in order to hazard the incurring of what we conceive to be a Presumptive Ill. A mode of acting this, contrary to every maxim of human prudence. Should they however persist in calling every kind of Test an actual Evil to the Country, and *therefore* urge the expediency of abolition; the answer is obvious: viz. if it be an Evil, we know the extent of it; whereas the extent of Evils to be fear'd from Innovation, we do not know. But common sense directs, that of Two Evils we should choose the least.

constitutionally establish'd, however Legally conducted may not always be expedient; that Liberty is the result not of ungoverned Licentiousness, but of Mild Restraint by Law; not of Universal Equality, but of due Subordination; that Independence in Private Life is perfectly consistent and compatible with Obedience to the Civil Magistrate; that true Patriotism consists in the generous sacrifice of Self-Advantage, and the decent submission of Self-Opinion to the consideration of Public Weal; thus persuaded, I should think it my duty as a peaceable Subject to acquiesce, and to join as a LAYMAN, not indeed with every Sect, but with any One Sect that held the Divine Personal Pre-existence of CHRIST and worshipped HIM as their Redeemer. But till such other Sect is established by Law (an event I hope very far distant!) I am bound by every tie of Honour and Conscience to support the GENERAL SYSTEM of the Church of England; and to wish most cordially that All Church-of-
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England Voters may, in choosing Representatives for the Next and Future Parliaments, be TRUE to their own Cause, TRUE to the Establishment of their own Church, TRUE to the Constitution Civil and Ecclesiastical.

I am, Gentlemen, Your's, &c

October 24, 1789.

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